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October 16, 2002

USDA Agricultural Marketing Service
Room 2085-S
Mail Stop 0299
1400 Independence Ave. SW
Washington DC 20250-0299

Re: Country of Origin Labels

Dear USDA:

The OCA is a grassroots non-profit public interest organization concerned with food safety, industrial agriculture, genetic engineering, corporate accountability, and environmental sustainability. We are the only organization in the US focused exclusively on representing the views and interests of the nation's estimated ten million organic consumers. We are writing in response to USDA's solicitation of comments on its proposed issuance of voluntarily country-of-origin labeling requirements mandated by the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002.

We agree with and reiterate the entire comments of CAFF (Community Alliance with Family Farmers) and the Dakota Resource Council.

Our members and supporters are highly interested in the quality of the food they purchase, and one of the best ways of ensuring that quality is information about country of origin. Specifically, we believe that consumers are best served by a strong, rather than weak, interpretation of Congress's intent in passing this law.

We also note DRC 's comment, "[W]e urge USDA to make the voluntary guidelines available to all businesses that sell the regulated commodities directly to the public, including restaurants and other retailers exempted under the law. We believe that such retailers may have an interest in and benefit from voluntary compliance, and should be made aware of compliance guidelines."

Sincerely,



Danila Oder
for Organic Consumers Association